Reclamation of devastated land in hills of Tikok Region

1237. DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after the devastation of the Hills of Tikok Region caused by the Coal India Ltd. due to the commissioning of opencast mining system, the whole region has been left behind without doing any work for reclamation of the land;

(b) if so, what is the total area of land that has been lying barren there; and

(c) what steps Governmet have taken for reclamation of the land to make the area habitable?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN): (a) to (c) After nationalisation of non-coking coal mines in 1973, opencast mining in the hills of Tikok region was started in 1978-79 and since then mining has been done over an area of amout 30 hectares. This has resulted in damage to vegetation, pollution and siltation of water courses and deposition of silt in the flat agriculture lands. Various Technical Committees have visited the area and given their recommendations for prevention of environmental damage in the area. On the basis of the recommendation of the Committee set up by the Ministry of Environment & Forests the Government had decided to stop opencast mining in Tikok region. The mining operations have since been stopped from 5th April 1990. Restoration work is, however, to be continued.

As a result of opencast mining, besides creation of open voids over 30 hectares, 25 hectares of area along the hill slopes and an estimated area of 2000 bighas of flat agriculture land have been affected.

Some restoration work which inter alia, includes construction of toe walls, check dams gully plugging by bamboo mats and terracing on the slopes and plantation thereon has been done over an area of 8 hectares of excavated voids. Another 15 hectares area of overburden dumps along the hill s opes has also been restored. The balance areas of 22 hectares of excavated voids and 10 hectare of overburden dumps is yet to be restored.

Government of Assam had also set up a Technical Expert Committee which had made a number of recommendations for implementation in the opencast mining sites. The implementation of control measures have also monitored by the Assam Pollution Control Board.

Long term plan to promote and encourage the Small Scale Units

1238. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to formulate a long term perspective plan to promote and encourage the growth of small scade and tiny units in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) by when the proposal is likely to be given effect to?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (c) Considering the special characteristics of small and tiny units in (i) producing industrial products in a short gestation period; (ii) neating charge employment opportunities at relatively low capital cost; (iii) dispersal of industrial activity and (iv) expanding the base of indigenous entrepreneurship successive Five Year Plan have accorded due importance to them in the overall development of the economy. Spesial measures have been taken to promote and encourage the growth of small and tiny units. The programmes of the Central and State Governments for the development of small and tiny industries